

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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ACDA-12 SSM-03 HA-05 MCT-01 /105 W
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O 221158Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7000
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PEPR PBOR EG IS LE US
SUBJECT: PRESS TREATMENT OF CARTER-BEGIN TALKS

SUMMARY. CAIRO DAILIES MARCH 22 DOMINATED BY HISTORIC CARTER-BEGIN FACE-OFF WITH DIFFERENCES AND SERIOUSNESS OF MEETING BEING HIGHLIGHTED. UNLESS DIFFERENCES
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RESOLVED PAPERS EXPECT "CONFRONTATION". COMMENTATORS EMPHASIZE SOUTH LEBANON SHOULD NOT DOMINATE TALKS TO DETRIMENT OF MAIN ISSUES. GOE CERTAIN TO BE IMPRESSED WITH U.S.-STATED DETERMINATION NOT TO LET THAT HAPPEN.
END SUMMARY.

1. ATMOSPHERICS. HEADLINES ANNOUNCE OPENING OF BEGIN-

CARTER TALKS "AMIDST ATMOSPHERE OF TENSION AND CONCERN" AND NOTE CARTER RECEIVED BEGIN "WITH LONG FACE" AND "BEGIN DEPRESSED WHILE DELIVERING HIS SPEECH." AKHBAR PRINTED PICTURE OF UNSMILING CARTER AND BEGIN. CARTOON IN AHRAH SHOWS A LARGE-SIZED CARTER ABOUT TO STEP ON SMALL FIGURE OF BEGIN WITH BEGIN SAYING "WHERE IS THAT MAN CARTER SO I CAN SHOW HIM HOW TO BEHAVE."

2. OPENING SPEECHES. AHRAH CHARACTERIZED TONE OF BEGIN AND CARTER SPEECHES AS "SHARP" REFLECTING "TENSE" RELATIONS. STORIES ALSO CARRY CARTER'S CRITICISM OF BOTH TERRORIST RAID AND ISRAELI RETALIATION. GUMHURIYYA REPORTED CARTER SAYING ISRAEL NOW AT SUMMIT OF ITS MILITARY STRENGTH. AHRAH AND AKHBAR REPORTED SAME REMARK BUT HAD CARTER SAYING ISRAEL SECURE ENOUGH "TO MAKE SOME CONCESSIONS." SADAT'S NY TIMES STATEMENT THAT U.S. HAS "PIVOTAL ROLE" TO PLAY ALSO HIGHLIGHTED.

3. DIFFERENCES. STORIES HIGHLIGHT ISRAELI-U.S. : DIFFERENCES ON 242 AND SETTLEMENTS, SAYING CARTER AIMS TO GET ISRAEL TO RECOGNIZE 242 APPLIES TO WEST BANK/GAZA AND THAT ISRAEL CANNOT KEEP SETTLEMENTS. TALKS EXPECTED TO BE "FRANK" AND FAILURE TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES TO LEAD TO "CONFRONTATION."

4. EDITORIALS HOPEFUL. AHRAH WARNS AGAINST LETTING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEGIN MAKE SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION FIRST ISSUE IN TALKS IN ORDER POSTPONE DISCUSSING MAIN ISSUES. AKHBAR REMINDS READERS THAT OBJECTIVE OF UN RESOLUTION 425 IS TO SECURE IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL AND CARTER WILL ASK ISRAEL TO COMPLY. GUMHURIYYA SAYS CARTER IS EXPECTED TO PRODUCE DECISIVE RESULTS FROM BEGIN MEETING ON 242, SETTLEMENTS, WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON AND PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. GUMHURIYYA BOARD CHAIRMAN MUHSIN MUHAMMAD, IN COMMENTARY ENTITLED "U.S. ROLE", PRAISES U.S. CALL FOR IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON AND HOPES THIS ATTITUDE WILL BE REPEATED ON OTHER ISSUES. HE SAYS CARTER HAS MEANS TO GET BEGIN TO GIVE UP HIS INFLEXIBLE POLICY.

5. COMMENT. CRUCIAL NATURE OF CARTER-BEGIN FACE-OFF COMES ACROSS IN MEDIA TREATMENT AS DOES EGYPTIAN PENCHANT FOR WISHFULLY THINKING THAT THIS MEETING WILL SOLVE EVERYTHING. GOE OFFICIALS ARE CERTAIN TO BE IMPRESSED WITH U.S.-STATED DETERMINATION NOT TO ALLOW LEBANESE PROBLEM TO DISTRACT IT FROM TACKLING BEGIN ON PRINCIPAL ISSUES. EILTS

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FACE-OFF WITH DIFFERENCES AND
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